

SWEET CHARITY (Cadogan Hall, August 22, last night of brief run)

By **Mark Taha** - Aug 25, 2015



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I seldom see a show because of its star, but Denise Van Outen is one of the few exceptions. This concert production of a classic Broadway musical meant less costumes and choreography, just the singing, acting, and dancing.

Charity is a feisty, romantic dance hall hostess who's unlucky in love but always willing to try again. There's the problem, Denise is beautiful, blonde, great legs, talented in every possible way, to put it bluntly, she's too good looking. There is no way any normal bloke in his right mind would dump this girl, much less refuse to spend the night with her. Shirley MacLaine in the film was more kooky and eccentric, and convincing.

Both the singing and dancing are excellent. *There's Gotta Be Something Better Than This* is sung with real feeling by Charity and her friends, played by the talented blonde beauties Kimberley Walsh and Kerry Ellis – any dance hall with these three on offer, as it were, would have queues round the block! Michael Xavier plays Charity's three guys excellently, it's hard to remember that the suave sexy film star and nervous tax accountant are played by the same actor! Rodney Earl Clarke as Daddy performs the *Rhythm of Life* brilliantly, a man who's realised that starting your own religion is the key to a fortune!

In short, a first rate temporary revival of a classic show with several standout songs, the best known being *Big Spender*. Perhaps Denise might consider *Cabaret* or *South Pacific* next?

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